



# International Safety Awards 2019

Chief Adjudicator's Report

# British Safety Council

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#### Results

A total of 590 applications were received for the International Safety Awards in 2019 and 507 (86%) of these successfully achieved a Pass grade or higher.

The grading distribution among the applications in 2019 was as follows.

Distinction	57	(10%)
Merit	250	(42%)
Pass	200	(34%)
Fail	83	(14%)

There was no quota of grades to be awarded. If every applicant meets the required standard, every applicant will be awarded a Distinction.

#### General comments

As with previous awards, it was clear that considerable effort had been invested in those submissions that scored well. Strong applications were once again characterised by each question being analysed and answered in complete terms and by full utilisation of the allocated word count. The application of practical and real-life examples from the workplace was a key requirement for a number of questions and high-scoring applicants developed comprehensive submissions through their use of relevant and interesting evidence. Applicants in this category approached each individual response with obvious care and attention to detail and with appropriate regard to the site-specific nature of the scheme. In doing so, these applicants secured consistently high scores without breaching the word limit.

The adjudicators again reported many instances of good or even exceptional initiatives among the submissions this year, with innovative or pioneering practice featuring strongly across a range of sectors and award grades.

As always, the adjudicators remain alert to the financial, global and resource challenges faced by many organisations and the implications of this on planning, available finance, budgets and deployment. The adjudicators were therefore again greatly encouraged to observe safety, health, welfare and wellbeing retaining the prominence that these areas warrant within organisations' financial expenditure and future commitments. In this regard, a notable and positive development was the emergence of mental health and financial health as important considerations for planning and resources.

As applicants will observe from the grade distribution, the standards required of applicants to the International Safety Awards continue to be robust. Each submission is carefully reviewed and scored according to its particular merits. For applicants wishing to score well, it is critical that they dedicate sufficient time to the analysis of each question and its requirements before a response is embarked upon. It is important that applicants ensure each question is answered in complete terms since the top mark bands for each question can only be accessed once all of its aspects have been addressed in

sufficient detail. As in previous years, weaker submissions tended to digress from the questions posed or otherwise restricted responses through partly relevant information. Similarly, responses of less than 300 words almost inevitably scored lower marks through insufficient detail - again, those that simply listed activities or factors with limited context could not expect to access the higher mark bands.

New and repeat applicants are again firmly encouraged to make use of the marking scheme and the Chief Adjudicator's Report from the previous year as a guide to the standards expected. Taken together, the questions, marking scheme and Chief Adjudicator's Report are clearly of central importance to any successful application. Much was done to promote the available information; however a significant proportion of applicants continue to overlook aspects of this information despite the emphasis regularly applied to it.

The adjudicators recognise that there is a limit to the amount of detail that can be provided given the word limits that are in place. Applicants should look to communicate the salient points of their systems, methodologies and approaches to planning and include some relevant detail or examples in support. It is not a requirement of these awards for applicants to describe everything in detail in order to gain full marks. Taken together with the preliminary questions, a 7,000 word submission (i.e. 10 x 700 words) across a range of questions is quite sufficient for an adjudicator to make a valid judgment regarding an organisation's approach to health and safety management.

Towards a continual improvement of the scheme, the 2019 awards included the option to submit supporting evidence for 50% of the scored questions. The intention was to provide applicants with the opportunity to demonstrate actual and demonstrable evidence in support of the associated written responses. One additional mark was available per applicable question on the basis of the uploaded evidence being (a) relevant to the overall content of their written response, (b) current (i.e. clearly dated/endorsed) and (c) completed (i.e. blank template documents were not acceptable).

In addition, recognition was also given this year for evidence of external accreditation of the applicant's health and safety management system (for example, achievement of 3-5 stars in the British Safety Council 5 Star Audit or valid OHSAS 18001 / ISO 45001 certification).

The option to apply for these supplementary marks received positive feedback from a range of applicants and proved popular in practice with around 95% of applicants applying for at least one of the available marks. Through this process, over 3,000 forms of evidence were assessed - the vast majority of which were of a good standard and clearly associated to the written component.

A proportion of applicants missed the opportunity to gain additional marks through their submission of evidence that was either unrelated to the written response, incomplete or out-of-date. This was particularly noticeable with the evidence provided for Question 10b (health and wellbeing) which, in some cases, involved images of activities without any further explanation.

Almost all the applicants who submitted evidence relating to current external accreditation were able to achieve the additional available marks. The most popular submissions were OHSAS 18001 certifications.

The Chief Adjudicator thanks all the applicants, wishes them well in all their endeavours and reminds them (and future applicants) once more on the importance of referring to the marking scheme and taking advice from the previous year's Chief Adjudicator's report.

## Question 1

**Describe the nature and scope of the main operational activities carried out at the site.**

The marking scheme specifies that *“This question is not marked but is mandatory as the response is essential for the adjudicators to understand the context and background of scored Questions 3-12.”*

A number of responses to this question included lots of corporate information. Whilst often interesting, such commentary offered limited insight in terms of the site and its operational activities.

## Question 2

**What are considered to be the most significant issues at the site in relation to the following. Please provide at least one example of each.**

- Occupational health hazards
- Occupational safety hazards
- Welfare concerns

The marking scheme reiterated the function of this mandatory but unmarked question (i.e. as per Question 1, to provide context for the marked questions). It should therefore be noted that carefully considered and articulated responses were essential here for adjudication of the scored component of the application.

This question effectively guided applicants through the further development of the context and operational environment at the site. A general correlation was apparent between responses to this particular question and overall scores; higher-scoring applicants consistently addressed all three components of Question 2 and focused on those activities posing the most significant concern for each area (and in doing so established a stable foundation for the remainder of their application).

Regrettably, a proportion of responses to this question consisted of simple lists lacking in the depth or description required to ‘set the scene’ in terms of health, safety and welfare at the site concerned. In turn, this undermined the scope for securing higher marks overall (i.e. as the relative suitability of the applicant’s stated actions, policies and methodologies across the substantive elements of their submission was rendered unclear).

**3. Explain how control measures implemented for one of the significant health and/or safety hazards identified within question 2 are monitored for effectiveness.**

Question 3 had a clear association with Questions 1 and 2. It was designed to assist applicants in the development of their commentary to explain how the control measures were monitored for their effectiveness - negatively or positively. It was notable that only the stronger submissions identified this link and built directly upon the preceding responses. Furthermore, only the highest-scoring applicants covered in detail one significant hazard; lower-scoring responses tended towards rather generic or broadly-based commentary here and did not ‘guide’ the wider basis of Question 2 down to the relevant detail and focus required here.

Clearly, the word ‘effectiveness’ was of central importance to the question. Higher-scoring responses included focused commentary on how the effectiveness of control measures was monitored and what was achieved in terms of continuous improvement and learning for the site concerned (these responses frequently explored effectiveness in the context of both positive and negative experiences).

Regrettably, there were a number of very brief and generic answers to this question which neglected important aspects of effectiveness analysis. In order to achieve high marks, applicants needed to link their response to preceding answers in an effective manner and detail the process used to monitor the effectiveness of both the approach (e.g. improvement in accident performance or direct feedback from employees) and the controls in place.

The highest-scoring applicants provided a comprehensive explanation of the process for evaluating the effectiveness of the control measures.

**4a. Describe how relevant stakeholders (employees, contractors etc.) effectively participate in the risk assessment process.**

This question was about ensuring that relevant stakeholders were involved in the risk assessment process (hazard identification, risk assessment and controls). Clearly, it was vital that the relevant stakeholders were first identified in the response (e.g. employees, contractors, agency casual employees, etc.).

High-scoring responses addressed the various components of risk assessment in site-specific terms, across a range of appropriate stakeholders and provided appropriate examples. They also recognised that stakeholder groups are varied and that some constitute vulnerable groups that fall into a number of categories (e.g. client, contractor, supplier or member of the public). The responses then described how risk assessment and associated communications were tailored to meet these specific groups. The strongest responses explored some of the challenges faced when involving stakeholders (e.g. when English is a second language or when limited literacy skills are evident). In doing so, the applicants exhibited an understanding that these issues require managing to ensure inclusion and to reduce exposure to risk. The highest-scoring applicants explained the procedures that they had in place to engage stakeholders (with particular reference to vulnerable groups in high risk areas/hazardous industries).

The highest-scoring responses to this question included a comprehensive description of how relevant stakeholders participated in the risk assessment process and they supported this with examples of how the approach had been productive.

Weaker applicants typically referred to one-way communication methods and neglected to discuss the importance of inclusion, participation and engagement.

**4b. Submit supportive evidence as attachment (for example: current risk assessment).**

This question was generally very well supported by applicants (typically by means of a completed risk assessment clearly showing stakeholder involvement). Other forms of evidence included job safety analysis, training records and hazard identification sheets.

A few isolated responses did not secure the mark here - in most cases, due to the submission of an incomplete risk assessment template or templates.

**5a. Describe how the emergency incident arrangements at the site are communicated to all relevant parties (including non-employee groups in particular) and how the effectiveness of such arrangements is evaluated.**

This question served as a good example of how effective reference to the marking scheme can support an applicant. Applicants needed to consider means, effectiveness and evaluation - only the highest-scoring applicants covered all three sufficiently.

High-scoring responses were, in most cases, comprehensive in terms of the activities and stakeholder groups considered and they recognised that partnering with specialist services such as the fire authority, rescue services, insurers, regulators and enforcers (etc.) may be necessary. These responses determined activities by high, medium and low risk and detailed the emergency arrangement discussions that had been conducted. They often also reported on scenario planning, business continuity/disaster recovery planning and the importance of employee engagement in effecting high quality emergency plans.

High-scoring applicants provided a comprehensive description of how the emergency incident arrangements at the site were communicated to all relevant parties, with a brief explanation on how relevance had been determined.

The highest-scoring applicants provided the various information above and then ensured that their response built on this by identifying all relevant stakeholders (including non-employee groups) and specific examples of how effective communication had been evaluated.

Generic or insufficiently detailed responses to this question inevitably struggled to secure high marks. Responses limited to “*We tell our employees at induction*” (and similar) were observed with rather frustrating frequency in lower-scoring submissions.

**5b. Submit supportive evidence (for example: communication to stakeholder(s) and/or evaluation of effectiveness).**

This was a generally very well answered question with most applicants submitting relevant and valid evidence. Evidence included recent fire drill reports, fire warden de-briefings, fire equipment test records, fire safety training, etc.

**6a. Explain how the potential health and safety impacts of any changes in the workplace are assessed.**

This question sought to explore how agile risk assessment/risk management at the site is achieved in practice and how risk review/dynamic risk assessment is deployed. Only the strongest applicants answered this question in its entirety. A disappointingly high number of responses evidently failed to identify this area as an issue and underestimated the importance of change management.

The highest-scoring responses involved a comprehensive explanation of how the impacts of any changes in the workplace were assessed and how health and safety standards/controls were maintained.

The lowest-scoring responses often failed to provide sufficient information or supporting examples to demonstrate that they understood the importance of assessing and supporting change.

**6b. Submit supportive evidence (for example: relevant change management process or change management risk assessment).**

The majority of applicants submitted either an example of a change management request form or a completed change risk assessment. In some cases, examples of a complete management of change process were provided (these were accepted if current or where evidence of a review was evident).

Some applicants submitted change requests which were considered too outdated (e.g. those from 2014 or earlier).

## **7. Describe how senior management are proactively involved in setting health and safety objectives for the site.**

This question concerned the top management team at this site (i.e. senior leaders) assuming an active role in setting standards and associated objectives to deliver a positive culture of health and safety across the site.

Internal and external stakeholder populations - directly employed individuals, contractors, suppliers, suppliers, manufacturers, enforcing authorities, (etc.) - clearly play a key part here. The adjudicators were therefore looking for examples of how the top management team exerted a positive influence over those in the operation and how non-health and safety managers (for instance, those in HR, Procurement or Finance functions or others not traditionally associated with operations) demonstrated an active engagement in these important matters. As most health and safety practitioners will recognise, these groups play an important role in maintaining a positive attitude throughout the organisation and they are to be actively engaged with in the pursuit of continuous improvement.

The strongest responses provided clear evidence of how the top management actively served as role models and 'walked the talk' - and how this delivered significantly more value than rhetoric (i.e. delivering a flow-through benefit that contributed to a positive employee attitude fully across the stakeholder populations). These responses provided a comprehensive description of how senior management were proactively involved in setting health and safety objectives for the site.

Weaker responses often framed their answer with close reference to their health and safety manager rather than the wider senior management team. Here, references to the Chief Executive Officer or Managing Director (or similar role) also tended towards routine or 'business as usual' activities such as chairing meetings, approving budgets and signing policies/agreements. Higher-scoring applicants provided examples of senior management team members engaging directly with the workforce and other stakeholders (e.g. key suppliers, audit bodies and enforcement authorities) in defining and setting objectives. Such responses recognised that visible and felt leadership, active intervention and support can positively impact upon employee attitude, morale and relationships - and ultimately upon performance. Responses of this nature also acknowledged the challenges faced by senior managers in their implementation of the relevant initiatives, such as employee turnover, inertia or cynicism.

The highest-scoring applicants provided a comprehensive description of how senior management were proactively involved in setting health and safety objectives for the site.

## **8. Describe how operational objectives across the site are linked to the objectives identified in question 7.**

As with several other questions for this award, the flexibility here offered the potential to score highly - though again, only where the marking scheme was followed and an appropriate rationale included within the response.

Lower-scoring applicants tended towards rather generic commentary, typically with a disproportionate focus on safety.

Only the higher-scoring applicants provided enough discussion, with examples, to illustrate that adequacy and effectiveness had been considered. Higher-scoring applicants typically answered this question in full by identifying the process used to link the objectives (such as business plans, strategic reviews, health and safety committees, etc.). These applicants demonstrated a 'read-across' from operational objectives to health and safety objectives (and vice-versa).

The highest-scoring applicants provided a comprehensive description of how operational objectives were linked to the objectives identified and discussed in response to Question 7 (and thereby provided additional colour to the commentary here).

**9. Describe how the health and safety performance of contractors is monitored and outline what actions may be taken as a consequence of any unsatisfactory performance.**

Again, whilst this question provided a great deal of scope for the applicant to showcase any novel methods or innovative approaches and the culture of their organisation, only the highest-scoring applicants took full advantage of the opportunity.

Question 9 sought a discussion around monitoring (i.e. philosophy, approach, tools, etc.) plus details of the action taken as a consequence of any unsatisfactory performance - such as senior management intervention, removal from site, penalties, etc. The adjudicators noted that responses were, in the main, rather focused on punitive measures as opposed to rehabilitation or education and that partnering was not as evident as perhaps it should have been. This offered an interesting insight and the Chief Adjudicator would encourage readers of this report to reflect on their own/organisational philosophy and its potential implications.

The highest-scoring applicants provided a comprehensive description of how the health and safety performance of contractors was monitored and offered a clear outline of what actions could be taken as a consequence of any unsatisfactory performance (using both positive and negative improvement tools).

**10a. Describe what support and information are available to employees in relation to health and lifestyle issues (including work-related and non-work-related examples).**

This was another opportunity for applicants to showcase the work being carried out at their site, specifically around health and lifestyle - key aspects of broader wellbeing. It offered an open, flexible opportunity to discuss any range of interventions, activities and undertakings at the site that promoted and supported health and lifestyle.

Stronger applicants described their broad wellbeing arrangements and provided examples of enhanced provision (such as employee assistance programmes, wellness programmes and health promotion) and illustrated the tripartite relationship between health, safety and wellbeing.

The strongest responses to this question acknowledged the tripartite relationship and built on this to include financial wellbeing - an increasingly prominent topic in contemporary wellbeing debates. They then went on to discuss the difficulties that are sometimes faced when seeking to gain traction for health and lifestyle initiatives, the frequent absence of ROI (return on investment) data and the challenges faced in terms of securing resources (particularly budgetary-related resources).

Applicants in this category invariably structured their responses towards wellbeing and health promotion initiatives in place at the site and discussed the impact that these initiatives had made (e.g. improvements in attendance, improvements in safety performance, improvements in employee engagement scores and improvements in employee retention). Other examples from high-scoring applicants explored lifestyle factors and included flexible working arrangements, alternative leave arrangements to accommodate specific needs and the effective inclusion of other vulnerable groups (such as those for whom English is a second language).

It should be noted that this question required both support and information to be discussed. Weaker responses tended to focus on standard workplace initiatives or rudimentary practices such as safety committees, the provision of drinking water in towers (i.e. rather than via taps) and working hours - and did so with little or no reference to broader wellbeing in respect of health and lifestyle considerations.

Highest-scoring applicants provided a comprehensive description of the support and information made available to employees in relation to health and lifestyle issues (both work-related and non-work-related) and the ways in which this could be accessed. They also provided a range of appropriate examples to support their commentary.

**10b. Submit supportive evidence (for example: staff benefit scheme, wellbeing campaigns).**

Strong responses ensured a clear link to Question 10a and included examples of relevant wellbeing initiatives (such as health screening, medical support for family members and health awareness information).

Some applicants failed to indicate the relevant issue clearly. A number were very ambiguous (for example, photographs of medical processes) and accordingly they did not achieve the available mark.

**11. Describe how improved health and safety controls identified through accident/incident/near miss/non-conformance investigations are communicated to relevant stakeholders and, where appropriate, wider groups.**

Continuous improvement and the development of standards and processes are essential and robust accident investigation, audit and inspection play a key role in this regard. This question aimed to explore the methods and routes to improving performance and how, once identified, these improvements were communicated.

Low to mid-scoring responses tended to focus on accident investigation and, in the main, discussed how findings were communicated internally. Whilst this is obviously important, responses of this nature neglected to discuss the implications or 'lessons learned' and the sharing of best practice opportunities in the supply chain and wider groups.

Highest-scoring responses provided a comprehensive description of how improved health and safety controls, identified through accident/incident/near miss/non-conformance investigations, were gathered, filtered and then communicated to relevant stakeholders and wider groups (if appropriate). They detailed the routes to achieving this (e.g. formal correspondence, sharing of documents, workshops, joint development groups, etc.) and offered a range of examples, relevant to the size of the organisation, that were suitably pragmatic and illustrated the communication process with employees and stakeholders.

**12a. Describe with relevant examples how the outcomes of internal and/or external audits or inspections are used to improve existing health and safety arrangements.**

This question presented all applicants with a relatively unimpeded opportunity to score highly. It straightforwardly required of applicants to describe, with relevant examples, how the outcomes of internal and/or external audits or inspections were used to improve existing health and safety arrangements.

Continuous improvement is universally accepted as a key principle of successful health and safety management and improvement. The fact therefore that only the highest-scoring applicants included

examples within their response was a matter of disappointment as the adjudication team had anticipated higher overall performance across the various submissions.

The highest-scoring responses to this question made reference to the fact that there were numerous routes to improving existing health and safety arrangements and that internal and/or external methods could be utilised. High-scoring applicants also discussed sector-specific guidance and how/when this was used to make improvements (planning, execution, reporting, etc.). In most cases, high-scoring applicants developed and supported their response with a range of relevant activities such as inspection, audit, statutory examination and testing and discussed documentation compliance as a means of improving existing health and safety arrangements.

The highest-scoring responses provided a comprehensive description (with suitable accompanying examples) of how the outcomes of internal and/or external audits or inspections were used to improve existing health and safety arrangements.

As with previous awards, the various aspects of this question were quite purposefully designed so as to enable applicants to respond in flexible and dynamic terms that cover various influencing factors (i.e. terms that are quite distinct from simple legal safety compliance) - only the highest-scoring applicants recognised this.

Given the nature of the question, it was unfortunate that a proportion of the responses scored as modestly as they did, particularly as similar questions on this fundamental area had been posed for previous awards.

**12b. Submit supportive evidence (or example: extract from audit reports or completed inspection forms).**

This question was generally very well responded to. In most cases, applicants provided evidence of suitable and completed inspections, audits or audit schedules.